*Robin, Barry and Maurice Gibb.*

# THIS IS OUR LIFE

## By Barry Gibb

**Barry Gibb's here again to continue in his own words the story of The Bee Gees.**

**Let's see—where did I leave you all last week? Ah yes, on a staircase at Polydor Records, where the massed Gibb brothers were putting the finishing touches to a song called *New York Mining Disaster 1941*. And it was a pretty crowded scene, as I remember . . . do hope you managed to find your way home safely!**

Now I said that that song, though a bit on the morbid side, really changed our *World*—if you'll forgive a plug for a future record which we hadn't even thought about back in April, 1967. We thought *Mining Disaster* stood a fair chance—incidentally, there were still only four of us at the time, 'cos we hired a lead guitarist for the session. Vince Melouney fans, please, PLEASE be patient!

But let me tell you what it means when you have a new disc out—one on which you pin all your faith and hopes. Did you know that there are sometimes seventy new singles in one week? You've got your big names, of course, and the reviewers obviously pay extra attention to them. Then their 'mates' in the business clearly get a bit of space—and you can't blame the scribes for that. What's left, say forty discs, have then to be fitted in. *Spicks and Specks*, called *Knicks and Knacks* by ONE reviewer, had sunk almost without trace. So we were neither mates nor big names to most critics. . . .

We got the music papers so fast that week that it felt they were still steaming hot from the presses. Great panicky scene as we thumbed through to find the right pages. All we wanted was a mention, just a couple of words . . . and let's say right now that we were lucky.

One critic said we were surely set for success . . . *"the record's whole atmosphere is one of fear and possible death—and that's some message for such a relatively young group."* Great, thought we! Another writer said we must be destined for fine things. Fabulous, thought we! But . . . several critics thought we sounded very much like The Beatles. *"Not intentionally"*, wrote one. Those Beatles again. You may remember, if you've been with me all the way through this series, how it was this sort of criticism that gave us such a lot of bother in Australia.

What would hurt more, though, is if people had assumed we were deliberately copying The Beatles. You see, we really had got our basic sound going over there in Australia before anybody had heard of the Liverpool lads. As it was, it seemed fair enough if reviewers had to make some sort of comparison in order to express more clearly just what sort of a group we were. We got a lot of praise for the actual song. So, we figured in our blacker moments: if they don't like the way we sing and play, then we could make some money out of flogging our songs to other people.

So . . . we got more coverage on the record than we expected. And Mr. Stigwood and the record company lashed out loot on adverts. Sales figures were promising. But we still had to wait out a few weeks of nail-biting (and back-biting sometimes!) before it showed through into the Top Thirty. Can you remember really counting the days to Christmas, or a school holiday? Well, it was the same with us, only we were not sure that our own 'Christmas' was actually going to come.

Then, in the first week of May, IT happened. It went into the Top Thirty. The record got a lot of plugs on radio and most of the dee-jays were obviously on our side. We'd had enough setbacks so far not to think about jumping over the moon, but it was a solid start. We were in London where we wanted to be, and we were in the charts . . . for the first time. All this, remember, was only a shade over a year ago.

So when we had a Tony Blackburn show recently devoted entirely to our music, we could afford the odd pat on the back. But I'm glad it was pointed out that we Gibb boys had been trying our luck for nearly ten years altogether.

The odd folk who said we were "overnight successes" were a bit out—by about 3,500 overnights!

Before I get on to the subject of Vince, who was to complete our musical picture, must slip in a word about our dad. In those early days, he did a great job making other people have confidence in us—and in keeping up our spirits. He urged us to always tell the truth about everything. And if he didn't like something about the business, or stories on us, he'd speak up and say it was disgusting.

**Some people were against us having our father with us on important things. Well, that was just too bad! Dad was fighting for us and he didn't mind if he made himself unpopular standing up for our rights. Good for him!**

**Next week: the arrival of Vince. Honest!**